

**PERSPECTIVES OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS ON THE ROLES  
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN QUEENSLAND:  
AN INTERPRETIVIST STUDY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the perspectives of one cohort of secondary school preservice teachers regarding the roles of secondary school teachers as they explained their professional world both before and following a school based supervised professional experience.

A total of thirty-five participants (twenty-nine females and six males), aged between 21 and 48 years old, were involved in the study. All participants were enrolled in nationally accredited Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs which led to qualifications to teach into secondary schooling curriculum areas. The participants were variously enrolled in the following programs: the Combined Degree Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science, the Combined Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Arts, and the Combined Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Business or the Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary).

This qualitative study adopted an approach that focussed on the perspectives of the research participants, and how their social reality regarding the roles of teachers in Queensland secondary schools' is constructed. Through the interpretivist paradigm of symbolic interactionism, and reflecting the key principles of grounded theory methodology, the data collection drew on research frameworks and methods proposed by Crotty (1998), O'Donoghue (2007), Punch (2000) and Seidman (2006), and involved undertaking semi-structured interviews with participants. Additionally, the project was positioned within an historical socio-political perspective of both schooling and teacher education in Queensland. This approach, drawing heavily on the works of Britzman (1986), Furlong (2012), Lortie (1975), Weber & Mitchell (1995) and Zemke (2007) and provided a longitudinal examination of the precursor influences that collaboratively contributed to the formation of contemporary perspectives of preservice teachers in Queensland.

The various qualitative analysis processes proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) underpinned the interpretation of the data. These coding processes are foundational to the grounded theory aligned methodology that informs this study. Following a process of open coding and line-by-line coding of the data, four main themes emerged from the data. From these themes, three core propositions were derived. These propositions are:

- It was the perspective of preservice teachers that the role of the secondary school teacher incorporates a fundamental capacity to develop and maintain positive professional relationships with young people both inside and outside of the classroom context.
- It was the perspective of preservice teachers that the role of the secondary school teacher incorporates a fundamental capacity to possess subject area knowledge and a capacity to teach effectively and with enthusiasm.
- It was the perspective of preservice teachers that the role of the secondary school teacher incorporates a fundamental capacity to possess altruistic motivations for working with young people.

Referencing earlier work undertaken by Cross & Ndofirepi (2015), Sumara & Luce-Kaplar (1996) and Wright & Tuska (1968), in conjunction with the three core propositions identified within the data, a model was developed and referred to as the Preservice Teacher Role Identity Framework. This framework highlights the changing perspectives that preservice teachers report as they progress through their initial teacher education.

## List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACDE	Australian Council of Deans of Education
ACER	Australian Council of Educational Research
AEU	Australian Education Union
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AO	Order of Australia
APST	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
C2C	Curriculum into the Classroom
CAE	College of Advanced Education
CARE	Committee against Regressive Education
CASPer	Computer-based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics
DET	Department of Employment and Training
GAMSAT	Graduate Australian Medical School Admissions Test
HPE	Health and Physical Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MACOS	Man: A Course of Study
NADPE	National Directors of Professional Experience
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NEA	National Education Association
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Overall Position
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
QC	Queen’s Counsel
QCT	Queensland College of Teachers



QSE 2010	Queensland State Education Project 2010
SEMP	Social Education Materials Project
SETE	Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education
SEW	Social-Emotional Wellbeing
SPE	Supervised Professional Experience
STOP	Society to Outlaw Pornography
TCAT	Teacher Capability Assessment Tool
TEMAG	Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TFA	Teach for America
TFA	Teach for Australia
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TNE	Teachers for a New Era
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USC	University of the Sunshine Coast
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## **Statement of Original Authorship**

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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